

# HARPER'S WEEKLY

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

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NO SURRENDER.

U. S. G. "I AM DETERMINED TO ENFORCE THOSE REGULATIONS."



## HARPER'S WEEKLY.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER-7, 1872.

CIRCULATION 210,000.

WITH this Number of HARPER'S WEEKLY our readers will receive the Ninth Part of

## DORÉ'S LONDON.

This magnificent Serial, which is published at a high price in England, is issued gratuitously in Monthly Eight-page Supplements to the subscribers to HARPER'S WEEKLY.

WITH the next Number of HARPER'S WEEKLY will be sent out gratuitously a splendid EIGHT-PAGE SUPPLEMENT, containing a magnificent

## FOUR-PAGE PANORAMA

of the Burned District of Boston, giving a complete and picturesque view of the Ruins.

IN a few days HARPER'S WEEKLY will begin the publication of a new story by CHARLES READE, entitled

## "THE WANDERING HEIR,"

which the proprietors have secured by direct treaty with the author. The story will be profusely illustrated, in the highest style of art.

A NEW story by B. L. FARJEON, author of "Blade-o'-Grass," "Grif," "Joshua Marvel," etc., will be commenced in the next Number of HARPER'S WEEKLY. It is called

## "BREAD-AND-CHEESE AND KISSES,"

and will be profusely and splendidly illustrated.

## THE PRESIDENT AND REFORM.

THE President's constant and active interest in the improvement of the civil service, the contemptuous hostility to it of the majority of both parties in Congress, the demand for it in the Republican platform, and the President's evident intention of adhering to his convictions, give a new and special interest to the subject. It is, therefore, useful to inquire precisely what the new method is, and what improvement it promises. The "spoils" system is familiar to every body. It is a system which makes all the minor positions under government the reward of partisan activity. The chief qualification for them is not character or capacity, but efficiency at caucuses and at elections. The offices are given to "influence," and influence means political prominence. The results of this system are as familiar as its practice. They are almost without exception pernicious. A Presidential election becomes a contest for plunder, and consequently excites and exasperates the worst passions.

There are but two arguments for the present evil system which have any appearance of reason. One is that the Representative, being elected by the preference of his district, is to be regarded as its general political agent or attorney in the government, and must know better than any body else is likely to know who should be appointed to the various offices in the district. The other is that a new broom sweeps clean, and that better service is to be expected of fresh hands than of old hacks. But it is because both of these arguments, with others of the same kind, are proved by experience to be fallacious that there is such a deep desire of change among intelligent citizens. It is enough to say that the duties of a Representative are legislative and specific, and that he can not attempt to usurp a share in the executive administration without betraying his trust. Moreover, experience proves, what a little reflection would suggest, that the function which he thus usurps is not discharged for the public welfare, but for his private interest. Thus when General BUTLER says that he knows better than any body who ought to be postmasters in his district, he merely claims that he is the best judge in a case in which he is interested.

As for the new broom theory, it is an argument only upon the assumption that it is a new broom, and that the sole purpose of taking it is that it may sweep clean. But

this is not the fact. The officers are appointed not because of their especial competence and experience, upon which alone any expectation of cleaner sweeping could rest, but upon other considerations entirely. They know that they probably hold only until a stronger pressure than that which puts them in is brought to bear to put them out. Moreover, the place is the reward of past service, and future service is supposed to be its condition. To expect reforms in the administration of such an officer is almost futile; and, as a fact, the "hack" who was not promoted, upon the assumption that he was a hack, continues to perform all the substantial duties of the higher office. This argument of the new broom presupposes appointment for fitness only, and therefore has no relevancy whatever to a system of appointment by influence. The theory of appointment by influence is good enough; for it is that the President being elected by the people, and surrounding himself with a cabinet, he and they receive only honest recommendations and appoint only worthy men. That is the theory. But it can not possibly be the practice, because the appointing power must depend upon recommendations, and recommendations are interested.

The practical question, therefore, is, since the appointing power can not possibly personally know all the candidates who are presented and urged, how can it best inform itself? And experience having demonstrated that the present method of ascertaining fitness has ridiculously failed, the President proposes another, which he is trying. It may be said generally to be a twofold method. In the first place, if a vacancy occurs in a higher position of any branch of the service, he will first ascertain whether any subordinate is qualified to fill it before he turns elsewhere; while to the lower positions those applicants shall be appointed who have been found competent by actual investigation, and not those who are only strongly pressed by politicians. To say that not to promote in every instance is to stigmatize all who are not promoted as unfit is foolish, because many a man may be competent for an office for which he is yet upon many grounds unavailable. Again, rigorously to require promotion in every case in a service which, by the theory of reform, contains many inefficient officers, is to insist upon an absurdity.

To say that government by party requires conformity to the "spoils" system, and the transformation of the public service into a vast partisan hospital, is to assert what is not true. Government by party requires that a certain political policy which has been approved by the people shall be carried out in administration. And a change in all the subordinate offices is not necessary to any such result, while the practice of such a change tends to such monstrous perversion of the scope of an election that an honest expression of the popular will becomes doubly difficult. Ballot-boxes are not stuffed to secure a protective rather than a revenue tariff, but to provide plunder for bummers.

In the effort which the President is making under an adverse pressure, the force of which is only known to those who are familiar with political machinery, he is entitled to the most cordial support of every honest citizen in the country. The rules which he has adopted are merely tentative, and are wholly within his control. They are conveniences for him, not chains. His object is not a rigid observance of rules, but the improvement of the service and the purification of politics, by making character and capacity vital qualifications for the public as they are for private service. And all who sympathize with the purpose will heartily sustain the effort, although the particular method pursued may not seem to them the best that could be proposed. If Congress, as is now reported, is inclined to give battle—*Tirez, messieurs!* It will find itself confronted with every great journal in the country, supported by a most powerful and intelligent public opinion.

## THE LAST MURDER.

THE recent shooting of Mr. O'NEILL by Mr. KING in the city of New York has naturally drawn attention to the plea alleged in justification of such occurrences. All that is known is that Mr. KING asserts that his victim had wronged his honor. He draws a pistol and fires. The first shot misses. The second and third strike and kill. He runs into a room and locks the door, and when it is broken open he is arrested. The declaration of his motive is supposed to bespeak for him public sympathy: for the offense which he charges upon his victim is sometimes regarded as one which society properly suffers to be summarily punished by murder. Every body, then, holds his life at the mercy of any body who may allege that his honor has been outraged, or that he suspects it has been outraged.

The whole proceeding is a relic of barba-

ism. It belongs to the time of the duel, the exquisite absurdity of which was shown the other day in an advertisement published by Mr. N. B. FORREST, who asserted that somebody was a coward, a scoundrel, and a contemptible villain, and concluded by proposing to let the rascal have a shot at him. Does Mr. FORREST mean to say that a coward and a scoundrel can injure his honor? So the theory that the misconduct of a wife injures the honor of the husband springs from the barbarous idea that she is in some sense his property, and is not a responsible person. A man can not be dishonored by the conduct of others. He may be wounded, shocked, exasperated, heart-broken, but his honor is in his own keeping exclusively. The offense alleged in the present case probably arouses a deeper indignation than any other. But the honor of a husband is stained only when he is himself guilty of the offense which Mr. KING charges upon his wife.

However this may be, it is time to decide whether homicide is to be held justifiable for such reasons as are often gravely urged. And if there be a tendency to palliate murder—if "hanging is played out"—is it because public opinion is so averse to hanging that it will permit the murderer to escape rather than suffer the penalty of the law? Nothing is more fully established than that undue severity of punishment is a premium upon crime. But the law should either be enforced or changed, for there is undoubtedly a growing feeling that life is insecure, owing to the law's delay or evasion.

If, however, such homicides as this last are considered justifiable, that also should be fully understood. For if the reasoning be that the offense will diminish if summary shooting for it is permitted, we must, in order to preserve the good order of society, let the permission be known. Then if the murderer happens to mistake and shoot the wrong person, or discover after the murder that his suspicions were not well founded, his offense will be presumably mitigated by the fact that it would have been justifiable had he only happened to shoot the right person, or had his suspicions been correct.

## MR. FROUDE'S PROPOSITION.

THE attacks upon Mr. FROUDE's veracity, and the apparent sympathy with them that has been shown by certain papers, induced him to make the following proposition before beginning his third lecture in Boston:

"I feel it my duty, in view of the manner in which my lectures have been received in this country, to say a word to you who honor me with your presence at my lectures in defense of myself and my books, which I am pleased to learn have had a somewhat extensive sale in this country. I am accused of bad faith in my treatment of historical documents, and it has been charged against me that I am not to be trusted, and that I am a dishonest man. It is impossible for me to reply in detail to the charges of inaccuracy which have been made against me, and I have therefore determined to answer my assailants in the following manner. It is a challenge exactly similar to that sent by me to the *Saturday Review* some time since in answer to some criticisms which had been made against me. Let my accusers select any number of pages from any of my historical works, one, two, three, or four hundred pages as they may please, and submit them to the Keeper of the Records in England, with whom all historical documents are deposited. Let the Keeper of the Records then appoint a commission to examine and compare my works with these documents, and in case their charges can be made good, I forever after to hold my peace, and accept the dishonored position to which they would now consign me. If they do not make good their charges, they to make me a public apology, retracting what they have said against me—the expenses of this commission to be borne by me. As a writer who has done his best to tell the truth, I think it simple justice that this challenge should settle the question of the accuracy of my writings."

Nothing could be more direct and manly; and if the challenge is not accepted, the case is closed against the critics. Father BURKE, in his replies to Mr. FROUDE, addressed an enthusiastic crowd of Irishmen, and naturally gave the Irish view of the question. Mr. MELINE, in his work attacking Mr. FROUDE's history of MARY STUART, charges him with forgery and falsehood. He quotes Mr. FROUDE, and then, as he says, cites the original authorities. Whether he really does so can not be known, in the case of MSS., until the course invited by Mr. FROUDE is taken. Mr. MELINE's assertion proves nothing. If Mr. FROUDE, whose personal honor and scholarly character are involved, and who has no purpose but the truth of history and his own fair fame, may not be credited with a correct version and interpretation of the original documents, certainly the assertions of a Roman Catholic critic defending Queen MARY of Scotland have no superior claim to credibility. The appeal must be taken precisely where the historian has carried it, and until it is rendered the presumption is certainly not against him.

As to the Irish question itself, there is but one class in this country which has any special interest in it, and with that class it is a passionate political and religious interest. To Americans the question is chiefly historical and impersonal. To the Irish it is the sole question. Mr. FROUDE would settle it. But its agitation is the stock in trade

of political and religious demagogues. The Irish question were settled, if the wrong of Ireland were removed from the arena of rhetorical appeal, if the people of Ireland should seriously address themselves to the actual situation, the capital of a host of political and ecclesiastical orators would disappear.

The Roman Church, as is well known, has always a political policy; and there are a great many well-meaning people who think that it is especially persecuted whenever its politics are exposed. The convictions of the American people and their political constitution secure absolute religious equality. But one of the sects among us, the Roman Church, aims constantly at a subversion of one of the most vital of American institutions—unsectarian common schools. And why? What is the reason that it hopes and works for a sectarian division of the school fund? Because it fears the effect of the free mingling in the public schools of the children of its members with those of other religious denominations. It wishes to keep its communion separate and peculiar. And as the great multitude of its American adherents are Irish born, it is the political policy of the Roman Church passionately to appeal to the distinctive feeling of Irishmen for their native country and for their form of religious faith. The appeal is not for the purpose of making them better American citizens, but more intense Roman Catholics: to make a nation within a nation.

This is the key of Father BURKE's lecturing and preaching. At the conclusion of a lecture or sermon recently delivered by him he said, in substance, that St. PATRICK knelt at the feet of the Virgin and prayed that the Irish might always be true to their country and to their religion, and the holy Virgin knelt at the feet of the Saviour with the same prayer, and it was proclaimed in heaven that the Irish people would always remain true to their old land and their old faith. That seems to us a very poor kind of preaching for America. If Father BURKE should say to his audiences that they had left their native land and had become American citizens, that henceforth they and their children were Americans, that the chief glory of the country they had chosen was its guarantee of perfect religious liberty, and that nothing imperiled that liberty so much as ecclesiastical interference in politics, he would be doing a service in which not only Irishmen but the whole country would sympathize with him.

## CITY POLITICS.

LAST year's "tidal wave" of reform has not spent its force. Since the election the papers teem with exposures of the municipal swindling in New York, and the difference between these exposures and the assertions formerly made by a few papers is that these lead to practical results. In the old Ring days persuasions to silence of every kind were tried with success. Complaint was regarded as "striking," and it was supposed that a share of the booty was the price of silence. That this was often the fact is well known. But the overthrow of the Ring has changed all that; and the city of New York is rapidly learning the character of the government to which it so long patiently submitted.

The success of this reform movement so far forcibly rebukes those who thought that no relief was possible, and who always think that a combination of money and rascality is irresistible. These were the wisacres who constantly said, "Oh, what's the use? These men have got the machinery into their hands; they are sensible enough to conceal the steps of their knavery; they can buy up any opposition, and if things come to the worst for them, they will raise a mob and ravage the city." To this sigh of cowardly despair there was added the feeble suggestion that at least the rascals gave us something for the money they stole, and that all parties were equally corrupt. This is the kind of fellow-citizen that Tammany Rings pray for, because they know that over such their dominion is both absolute and eternal.

Will this feeble folk learn the lesson of the time? It is that we can have good government if good citizens will pay the small price demanded. A little thought, a little care, a little trouble: these are for us the conditions of honest government. Other men in other countries fought terribly and suffered long for advantages that we may have for the taking; and what we have ourselves won in the city may be kept by a little wise resolution.

The time, also, was never so favorable, because the old national party issues are fast disappearing; and in the city and in very many local elections henceforth there should be no other parties than the friends of honest and intelligent administration on one side and the knaves on the other. The Committee of Seventy in the city of New York have, therefore, done most wisely.